

EDITORIAL JOURNAL BOX

3-4/82

Until such time as we can arrange to have the photographs 'screened', or decide not to have photographs included in Journal, the new printing arrangement cannot be used, as the proposed printer has no facilities for screening photos.

I would suggest that everyone read Ted Thoday's letter, and have a good think about its contents. There is a lot of thought provoking material there, which, I hope, will lead to a better Association.

The Association, and Journal, can only be what the members want, and are prepared to support. The operative word is support. We can want all we wish, but if the support is not forthcoming, we might as well pack up.

If we cease production of Journal, we can save some \$6400 on last year's figures, or approximately \$8 per member. With that \$8 we could do a lot of things we can only dream about now. Then, perhaps we should strike a more realistic fee, say 50 cents a week, or \$26 per year, and use the increased revenue to fulfil some of those dreams.

But, what do you the members want? Unless the Federal Committee hears from you, they do not know either.

Please have a look at the Membership list included in this Journal and if you find any errors, let the FEDERAL REGISTRAR know. He is the person who keeps the records, and to whom all membership matters should be directed, not the Editor, or the Branch Committee person, or even the Federal Secretary. It costs us 24 cents to pass the information on to the Registrar.

Rex Little

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CONTENTS

	Page
President's Corner	30
The Secretary's Desk	31
FRENCHWOOD - an N gauge fantasy	32
An open letter to the members of A.M.R.A.	39
Contest Judging: Rhyme nor Reason?	45
Branch Notes	47
A.R.H.S. (Q.L.D.) field day 1980.	51

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PRESIDENT'S

CORNER



PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

Reading past presidents' annual reports and Secretary's Desks, your Association has always had many problems, both small and large, and it is pleasing that these were overcome and this will continue in the future.

Currently, our rate of membership renewals has shown a slight downturn, which is possibly allied with the fee increase which was delayed as long as practicable, bearing in mind the Association has no outside financial income and must rely entirely on membership fees and, in turn, offer members value for money.

On an optimistic note, Tim Dunlop has offered to assist in the preparation of articles submitted for publication in Journal, thus easing the work load on our Editor, Rex Little, and the Federal C.O.M. can now look at the possibility of bi-monthly Journals. Once the proposal submitted by Tim Dunlop has been investigated, and proved practicable, it is to be hoped that members will see their way clear to submit articles, hints, etc, for the interest and possible help of fellow members.

Due to pressure of Branch matters, the Advertising Manager, Stuart Westerman, has been forced to submit his resignation, which was received with sincere regret by the COM. Stuart has held this position for several years and will be missed. Thank you for a sterling job.

I would also like to thank Ray Cornish, retiring Federal Vice-President, who has decided not to nominate again owing to advancing years, for your

assistance and loyalty and to your wife, who so ably catered for our supper at the conclusion of COM meetings.

As reported in the balance sheet, the funds held in reserve for off equipment renewal have been reduced to meet current operating expenses and it is hoped that this reserve can be built up again so that it will not be necessary to use general funds.

The COM is currently discussing the regular issue of data sheets covering varying aspects of the hobby to financial members, and it is hoped that when available they will be of assistance. I would stress that this will be a long term project as all topics must be thoroughly researched prior to publication. Hopefully, the first issue will be available later in the current financial year. Any suggestions or comments will be welcomed by the COM.

One long and arduous task facing the incoming C.O.M. is the complete revision and updating of the Federal Constitution. This will be time consuming, but at the same time, necessary due to the growth of the Association.

I feel that in summary, while our finances are somewhat restricted, the COM is making every endeavour possible to make membership of AMRA even more attractive.

To conclude, I would like to thank the committee members for their assistance and loyalty, and last, but not least, to all members of the Association for their support, not only to the COM, but to AMRA in what have been troubled times.

Keith Wilcox

THE SECRETARY'S DESK



Firstly, congratulations to Bob Edwards and Graham Watson for their Meretorious Awards.

Bob has been an active member of the Victorian Branch, organised several exhibitions and is responsible for the editing of Journals.

Graham is a stalwart to the WA Branch, organised the Register of Clubs; which only lapsed from lack of support from the Clubs themselves. His correspondence has also enlivened many a Federal COM meeting over the years.

As I have stated over the years, these are the type of members who are givers and in so doing derive more from the Association than they otherwise would have.

There are various considerations under way with regards to Journal, also some possible changes to the Constitution, but these things don't happen overnight and need careful consideration before being made public.

Always we have to consider costs and what best can be done within the budget and for the benefit of members.

In the March/April issue there should be a lengthy letter from Ted Thoday; it will be interesting to see what reaction there will be from this.

I would like to see more members make use of Pop Valve to air their thoughts. We will never know what members think about the Association or the hobby if they never appear in print, none of the COM have done a course in 'crystal ball techniques'.

It would be of help if some members could write about their experiences in assembling any of the many kits that are now available.

There must be lots of gadgets or tools that members have come across that have proved useful in the hobby

and that could also be helpful to others if they were aware of some and their source.

We had a handy kinks section years ago, surely we haven't run out of ideas since then.

You may be doing some method which seems so simple you may assume others would be doing the same, but look at a lot of inventions, so simple one wonders why they never come to light years ago. But I don't think anyone would make much out of trying to patent an idea in the model railway field, unless it was of universal application with a wide market.

I guess with the wider range of kits coming onto the market, one can be more choosy in what one buys, and acquire trains consisting of better quality, and not have a collection of good, bad and indifferent. I also think a lot of problems encountered with the earlier kits were the undue haste in getting them rolling; just a little more time spent assembling would have produced a much better vehicle in appearance and running quality.

A fairly heavy vehicle which rolls easily is easier pulled than a lighter one which drags and half a dozen or so of these nearly cause a poor old loco to strip its gears to get them moving.

Good track and wheels are necessary to have trouble free operation, but sadly this is not always adhered to by many modellers.

But at least a lot of our members have obtained some of the gauges for track and wheels supplied by Peter Betts, and by making use of same, could eliminate many problems. Most branches carry some.

For those of you who can attend exhibitions, have a little game when looking at layouts, find the trouble spots in trackwork, or the vehicle which regularly de-rails, but on these types

of layouts, even the most tactful suggestion is not always well received, unless one is acquainted with the owner(s).

Norm Read

FRENCHWOOD - an N gauge fantasy

by Paul Kehoe

Photos by Don Edmonds

© Paul Kehoe 1981

Nestling five miles north of Preston, Lancashire, lies the sleepy rural village of Frenchwood. For some unknown reason, the 20th century has all but passed Frenchwood by without leaving an impression.

The old church, some say dating back from the time of the Norman invasion, sits sedately among the gravestones of its long dead congregation, although the Frenchwood Arms Hotel (conveniently next to the church) is a rebuilt version of the original Tudor building which was mysteriously burnt down one New Year's Eve.

Frenchwood was once famous for the quality of its barrels, made from the fine oak trees which comprise the wood itself. But as the cooper's trade disappeared under the onslaught of aluminium, the village sank deeper and deeper into hibernation.

Both the canal and the railway which served Frenchwood began to fall into decay, the canal through neglect, and the railway after suffering the sharp edge of the Beeching axe. Where once there had been trimmed grass, weeds flourished. Shiny rails were rusty, point rodding stiff and signal lamps the homes of spiders.

Algae covered the surface of the canal, the windows of the Coopers factory grew dim with dust and grime, and the building owned by Harry Hull, general supplier of the District, lost its air of viability of dependability.

Frenchwood regressed almost to the point of extinction...until the Canal Preservation Society chanced upon the clogged, lifeless waterway and began the task of restoring it to its former glory.

The activities of these stalwarts attracted the attention of the local Railway Preservation Body, which, in turn, drew to Frenchwood a cluster of artisans.

In no time at all the stunned residents of Frenchwood once again found themselves with a working canal, a working railway, and a factory bursting with the sound of leathersmiths and silversmiths and sculptors hammers, the harshness of which being tempered by the gentle swish of the artists brush and the lulling whirr of spinning wheels as a commune of craftsmen and women set about reviving the arts of cottage industries.

The canal carries both tourists and some goods, while the railway, after a monumental fight with the faceless ones of British Rail bureaucracy, now runs a complete daily schedule of both freight and people and (to the chagrin of the faceless ones) at a profit!

But nothing is ever the same as it was, and there are differences at Frenchwood. Smoke control regulations and other petty considerations forced the group to search for diesel motive power, a search which resulted in them obtaining the bargain of the decade.

British Rail (God bless its little cotton socks!) had imported a number of American diesels during the late forties and early fifties for 'trials'. These same locomotives had been gathering dust ever since. The group managed to obtain them for nothing, providing that they updated the signalling, etc, along the Frenchwood permanent way in order that British Rail might run its own stock once again over the metals, thus saving itself time and money on the route from Blackpool to Lancaster.

All was duly signed, sealed and agreed to, and the heartbeat of Frenchwood grows daily stronger.

Well, that's the fantasy...now for the facts!! Frenchwood is an excursion into N gauge. I would even hesitate to call it modelling in the true sense of the word, let alone 2 mm/ft scale!

Now before the hounds start baying for blood, and the screams of 'purist-rivet-counting-rubbish' begin flying through the air, let me emphatically state that I do not despise, denigrate, or in any other way dismiss the RTR layout.

After all, that's what Frenchwood is!

But what it isn't, is to scale...and I think the difference is worth noting. When, for instance, I mentioned to someone who alleges 30 years' experience that my next layout was to be in EM gauge at a scale of 4 mm/ft he said, 'Why? Why don't you just buy ordinary OO?'

Maybe this was simply a gut reaction from a person who is 'in the trade' and who could see sales disappearing out of the window...after all, 'the trade' here in the West seems somewhat reluctant to cater to oddball stuff like EM. What irks though, is not the 'Why?', but the qualified 'Why don't you....'. Frankly, sunshine because I don't want to, and the minute that I am told that, to be in model railways, I MUST...even by implication...is the minute where the ways doth part. Mediocrity...thy name is conformity.

Here endeth the philosophy.....How

did Frenchwood come to live? I guess the only sensible way to try to ensure that most areas are covered is to sub-head everything and hope for the best. So...

BASEBOARDS: There are five baseboards used for Frenchwood, all constructed from 41 mm x 18 mm pine frames and covered with 12 mm chipboard. The track plan shows the individual board sizes, but the overall layout area is 3.35 m x 1 m as near as dammit.

The framing is glued and screwed at the corners, and joining of the baseboards is achieved by bolts and wing-nuts. The bolts are 9 mm diameter in 12 mm diameter holes, thus allowing some movement in each plane to help accurate alignment.

At the joints the track is aligned and held with rail joiners, a bit fiddly but it seems to work.

The chipboard surfaces are laid all in one piece and nailed to the frame. Absolutely hopeless for any scenic work except flat fields. Next time it will be open topped. The whole shebang is supported on braced trestles.

TRACK: Is all Peco N gauge nickel silver flexible. The track is actually laid onto felt, not so much to quieten the running (it doesn't), but because it lifted the track just enough to give the impression (on myopic examination) that a correctly formed permanent way has been constructed.

Locomotion brand brown ballast was glued down with wallpaper paste, used as a thin solution, and I found this gave reasonably successful results, despite a minor amount of patching up. It also comes away easily should one wish to re-lay the track.

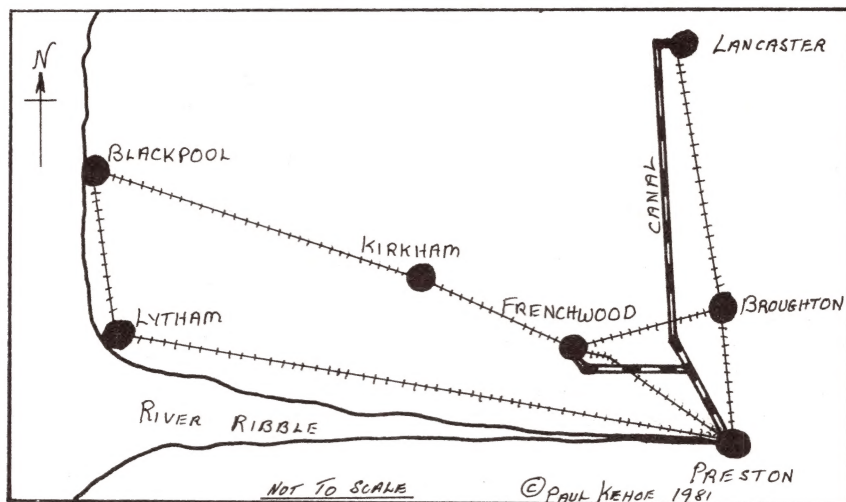
The rails are painted with Humbrol rust which helps to create the illusion that they are closer to scale than, in fact, overscale code 100 rail actually is! Hornby track pins hold the whole lot in place, but, on reflection, they could have been removed after the ballast had been glued. Rail joiners are employed more to assist alignment across

the sections than for electrical continuity.

POINTS: Again the products of Messrs Peco and exclusively the 'medium' point. All the points on the 'public' side (the side wot you watch it from) are fitted with Peco point motors, and these are operated through a transistorised (for quick recovery) capacitor discharge unit.

expression on the bank manager's face and the sarcastic chuckle from she-who-must-be-obeyed. Bachman won the day. Time (or ability...lack of) has so far precluded the casting off of the American outline bodies in favour of modified or scratch built British.

The point is, however, that these locomotives will crawl over the dead Peco frogs (or whatever) and, therefore



All the point blades were filed to stop the wheel flanges fouling them, but, apart from that minor irritant, I have no cause for complaint.

But here's the true reason for the use of those American diesels.....dead frogs! (Or crossings, or vees, or...) I tried Grafar, Lima, Arnold locomotives, both steam and diesel, and they all stalled at some time.

Now this is something I'm inclined to dig my little heels in about and make a noise!! REAL locomotives don't stall on the points, and God doesn't reach down every so often to give the trains a quick push. So why isn't the same true of RTR model locomotives?

There's no point in having every rivet detailed on the damn thing if it won't go!

Bachman behaves like the prototype, as does Minitrix. But one Minitrix for three Bachman, coupled with a stern

add immeasurably to the created illusion. After all, they are the fings wot make it look like it's working proper...and that alone might just get a nose in front in a photo finish argument about true prototype versus lots of finger pokin...until the true prototype works as well (true prototype model, that is!).

Incidentally, I do know that the particular locomotives used are from a later date than 'the late 40s, early 50s', but, as the legend on my cup says: 'To know is nothing at all...to imagine is everything!' (I think I'm going to be sick!)

LOCOMOTIVES AND ROLLING STOCK: Two Bachman GP40s and one F9 (used totally incorrectly as the station pilot, simply because its speed is controllable from absolutely dead slow down.

The rolling stock is a motley coll-

ection (in line with the fantasy of the Railway Preservation Body) of LMS, SR and British Rail, with a couple of private owner wagons thrown in for good measure.

Everything has been fitted with Kadee couplings (in order to keep God's fingers out!), but future layouts will utilise home wound electro magnets for uncoupling rather than the 'twixt track

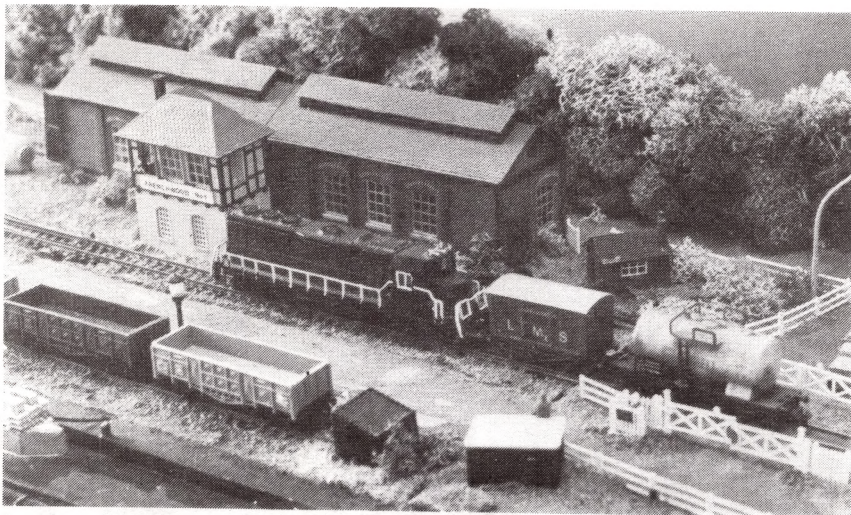
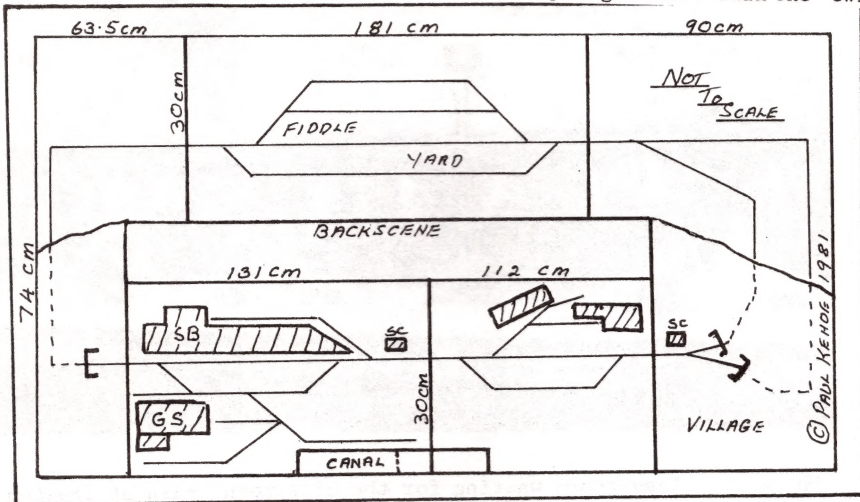


Photo 1 Loco 1, GP40, shunts across the level crossing

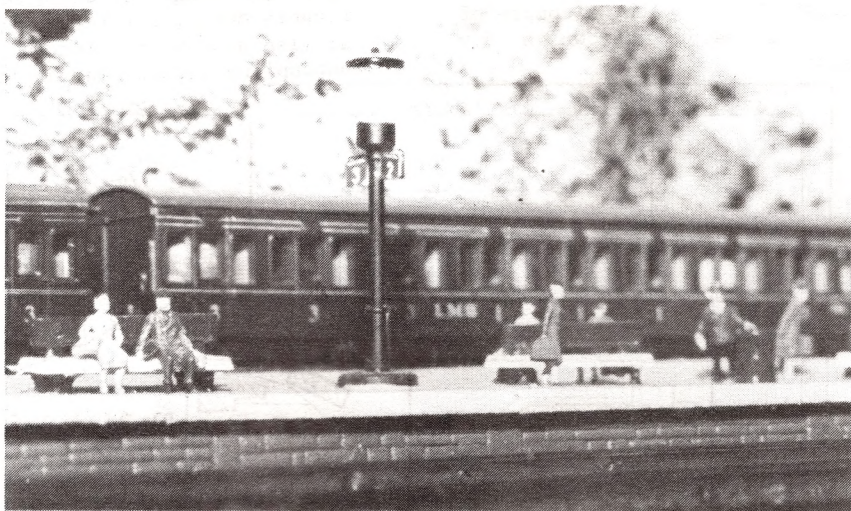


Photo 2 Passengers waiting for the afternoon train at Preston

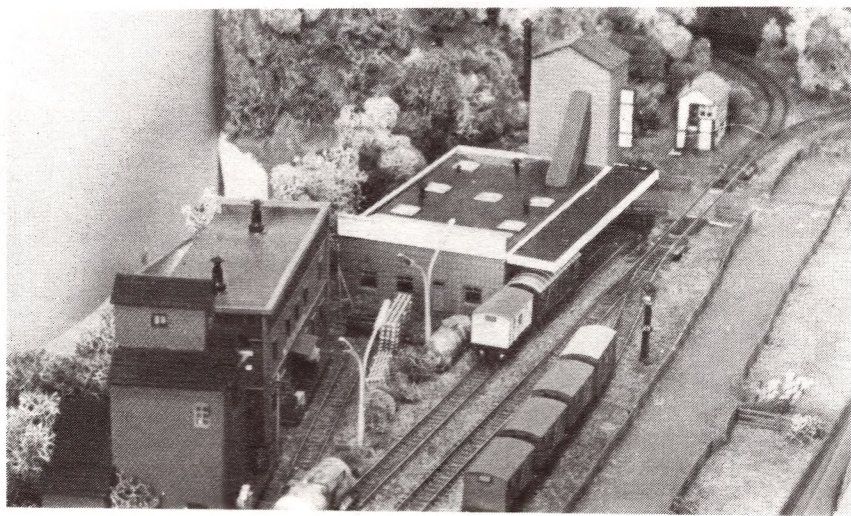


Photo 3 General view of the factory area with the junction signal cabin in the distance

bar magnets which -

- a look wrong;
- b distort the track anyway;
- c uncouple at the wrong time, particularly when using a pulse controller.

The rolling stock has been weathered (some of it), and the empty wagons now have loads.

Additional weight has been added to assist track adhesion and shunting, either in the form of a small chunk of something heavy, or, in the case of covered wagons (sounds like something from the wild west) by being filled with ballast.

BUILDINGS:

A truly international collection of Faller and Peco, Kibri and Pola, Bachman and home brewed... but all with one thing in common, namely a repaint job plus some varying degrees of modification. Not that this makes them unrecognisable, just different. A number have internal lights fitted running at 8 volts.

SCENERY: Peco scatter materials held down either by being sprinkled on to sticky green paint, or by the ubiquitous wallpaper paste. A mixture of 'meadow grass' and 'dark green' seems to give the best results. Fences are also Peco, but repainted, and the road surfaces are 600 grade wet and dry.

Trees are lichen on wire, while the hills were constructed by stretching masking tape over contoured chipboard, covering this in a good dunking of really yucky, sticky green paint, then scatter material and, finally lichen stuck hither and thither in an attempt to look random!

The canal has a base of plywood covered in the remnants of every paint tin I could lay my hands on! Several coats, thickly applied, of this foul concoction produced a sort of blue green which, when covered with several applications of Estapol high gloss varnish approximated water fairly well...at

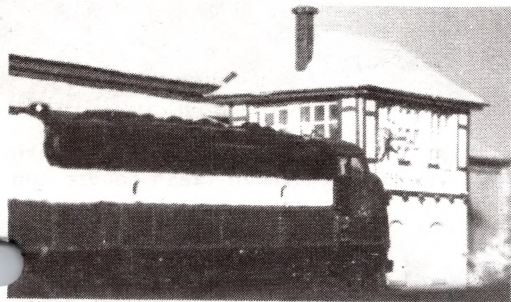


Photo 4 Loco 2, F9, saunters past Frenchwood No 1 box

Photo 5 Loco 3, GP40, noses past the goods shed into the station



least, canal water!

ACCESSORIES: Signals are two light aspect from Z, with the station lamps and street lights from the same source. The signals do change from red to green and vice versa as the points are thrown, but in a non-prototypical manner. Future layouts will incorporate interlocking.

ELECTRICKERY: Ah, yes, well actually a detailed set of drawings was produced which, to a point, were followed religiously...then things went a bit haywire. Luckily the major part had been completed which meant that all the points worked and the myriad of sections also worked. It's just that some colours of the wires didn't quite match up....

Actually it is all safe, but to describe it would take forever. Suffice

it to say that there are, in addition to circuits for lights and signals, circuits to operate 13 points and 12 sections. Multi-cored cable terminating in two 23-way plugs connected to a remote control panel operates this wonder, with one more 23-way plug and an odd number of DIN plugs and sockets for baseboard interconnections.

Power is supplied from five transformers, three for low voltage d.c. for lights and signals, one for 16 volts a.c. for the points, and one for 15 volts a.c. for controller. Each set of terminals is protected by a fuse.

It all seems hellishly over-complicated and over-protected, and it probably is. But I like it that way, there can't be enough protection where electrickery is concerned anyway, and it

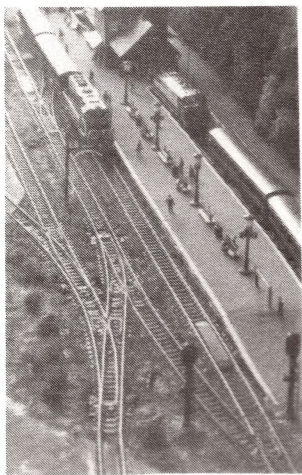


Photo 7 Loco 3 pulls into platform 1 with the afternoon train to Preston

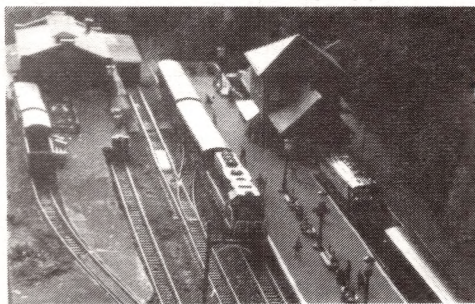


Photo 8 Loco 3 at platform 1 with the afternoon train to Preston



Photo 9 Loco 3 shunts while loco 1 prepares to leave with the mid-morning train to Broughton

works!

And so, as the sun sinks slowly over the edge of the typewriter, what else if left to say? The controller? Why not? I must confess that the question most frequently asked of me at the recent AMRA (WA) Exhibition was, 'How do you get them to move so slowly?'.
 The answer is pulse control, coupled with back EMF monitoring. I use an ECM VS type Compspeed (switched to Comp volt for shunting) and the results are superb.

Prior to obtaining this wondrous kit, however, the 'simple' version of a pulse controller which was described in the October issue of Electronics Australia (October 1978), also gave me excellent slow running, but only over a limited range of the 'throttle'. I found I got used to it, and it served faithfully and well...I'm just hooked

on the ECM!

Of course, if all the manufacturers of RTR gave us decent motors, pick up off all wheels, enough weight in the locos, and drive to all wheels, like Backman do, then....but that's another subject.

To conclude (thank the Lord, I hear you cry), Frenchwood runs to a predetermined schedule, but not really to time, with the consequence that operation can be fun because it's flexible. One can always have a tinny and do a bit of tail chasing, then get back to serious operation by picking up on the schedule where one left off.

Frenchwood rather gratifyingly stumbled accidentally into second place at the judging of exhibits for the Bill Gardiner Cup at this year's AMRA (WA) Exhibition, a feat which can only lead to one final sentence...if I can do it, I'm damn sure you can all do it better!

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF AMRA

Ladies and Gentlemen

Whilst you may be aware that I am the President of the Western Australia Branch of A.M.R.A., this letter is written in my capacity as a member of AMRA only, and does not necessarily reflect the views of the WA Branch's Committee of Management, or of those members of AMRA resident in Western Australia.

For some considerable time I have viewed with some disquiet certain things concerning AMRA, its' functions and operations and Journal. I have considered putting pen to paper before, but felt that we in the West could not see the full picture, even though I am probably as well informed as anyone else outside the Federal Committee and 'staff' of Journal.

Recently, however, the President of another State Branch, in Perth on urgent family business, contacted me, and managed to find several hours in which he and I discussed the very things that

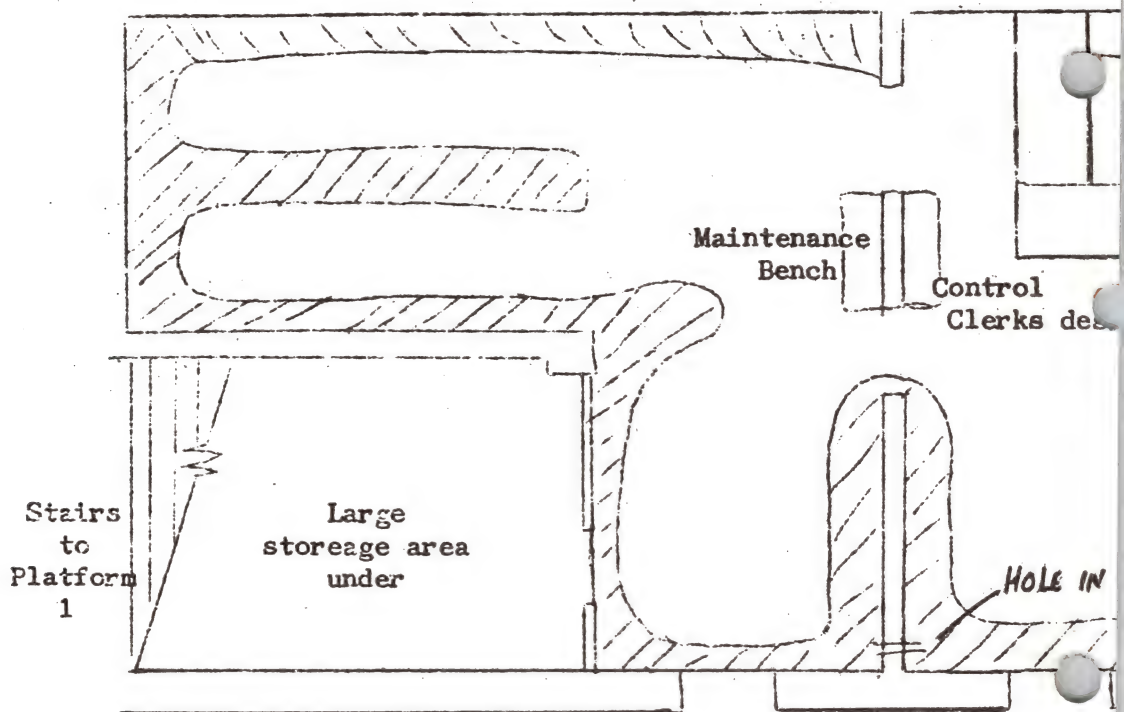
were of concern to me, and which were also concerning him. I think it fair to say that we were in broad agreement on the vast majority of the points discussed. The message which came through very strongly from both sides reflected our deep concern that AMRA needed to be examined very closely to see if it was fulfilling the needs of the membership, irrespective of where the individual members reside and, if not, what could be done to achieve that result.

I am not interested in fault finding, or bone pointing. The objective of this letter is to act as a discussion paper to elicit constructive comment, ideas and discussion, to find out what the membership needs and what needs to be done to fulfil these needs.

First I think we should look at some salient points.

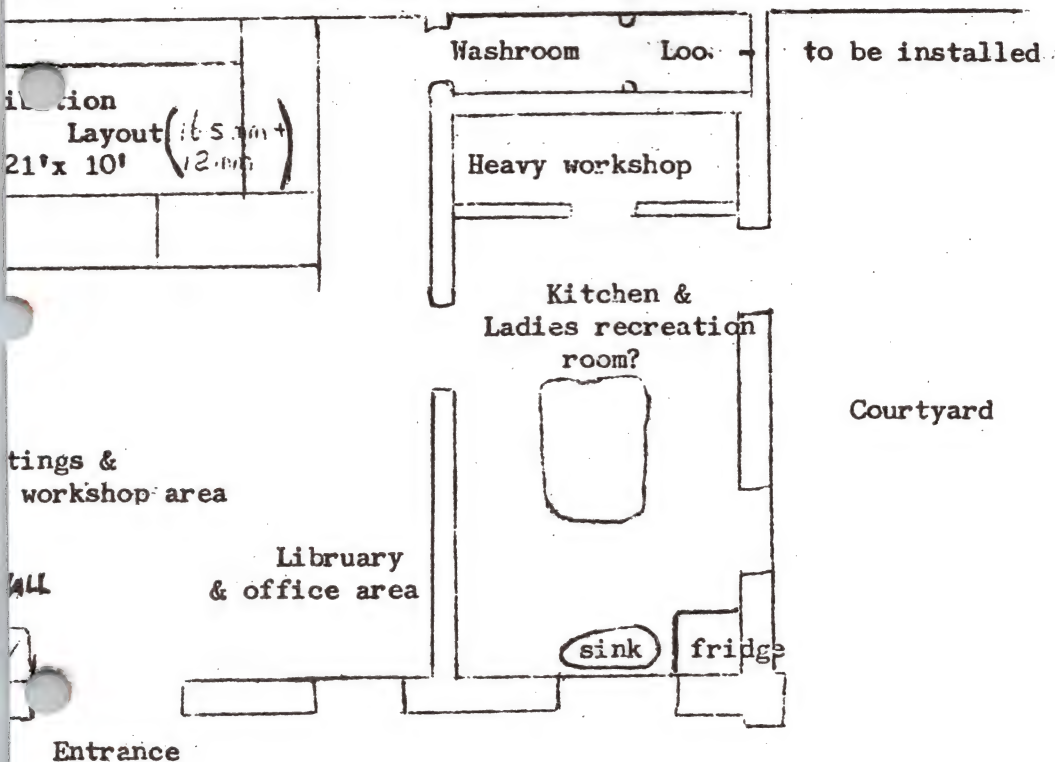
In Western Australia we have a fairly active Branch with an interested and active committee. We are probably as autonomous as is allowed under the continued page 42

Layout of A.M.R.A.



The shaded areas outline the proposed concept of the future branch layout. The around the wall concept has many features including * ease of construction *no duck unders * realistic operation can be easily achieved with stations out of view from each other * plenty of aisleway space * sections like the peninsula could be made to be removed and displayed at exhibitions. The whole set up to be built in modular form so that removal and reassembly in future clubrooms would be not too troublesome.

ensland Branch Clubrooms



It has been discussed that this system could be hooked up with the exhibition layout (as a balloon), this was said to be done many years ago in past clubrooms. The entire system would use 16.5mm track to cater for HO, OO & Sn3½ scales while 12mm track for HOn3½ and 9mm for N and TTh3½ would also have lengthy sections too.

With the 16.5mm trackwork alone, as well as train crews, a control clerk or dispatcher in telephone contact with the stations would be employed. Several Station Masters would/ could also be employed, with the aim of getting everyone involved for maximum enjoyment.

AMRA Constitution.

At our major meetings we probably see about 20% of the total membership resident in WA.

During a twelve month period we probably see a further 5-10% on occasional visits.

This means that about 70% of the AMRA members resident in Western Australia have only the 'Journal' and the 'Branchline' as their communication with AMRA, or perhaps it should be put the other way round, the only communication AMRA has with the WA membership is the 'Journal' and 'Branchline'.

A similar situation exists in two other states. Those members not living in WA, NSW or Queensland, only have 'Journal'. Is that good enough? I think not.

I belong to another model railway organisation, and in general terms, it went through a similar set of problems and evolved the better for it.

What I am suggesting, Ladies and Gentlemen, is that it may be that AMRA as it has existed has now reached the stage where it is time to evolve to meet the changing needs of the hobby in Australia in general, and the AMRA membership in particular.

It may be that in the process of evolving a few 'sacred cows' will have to be slaughtered if they have outlived their usefulness then so be it.

I think that each facet of AMRA's operation should be examined in depth and if the reason for any part of that operating continuing is that 'we have always done it that way', that is the most compelling reason for the examination to continue to find a better way.

I am also aware that it may be argued that there are practical problems attached to this evolution. Let us consider these 'problems' as 'challenges' and not let them stand in the way of making AMRA ready for the next twenty years or more. What men put together men can take apart and improve.

Where shall we start? Perhaps the Constitution and Rules of the Association. They have served AMRA well over the years, but are they capable of

carrying AMRA forward in the future?

Perhaps a completely new Constitution should be drawn up, by a legal expert in that field, and if possible the one Constitution should cover the activities of the 'State Branches' instead of each having a separate Constitution subservient to the Federal Constitution. Certainly some of the things proposed in this paper will require the present Constitution to be amended, at least.

The Federal Committee again has served well over the years, but it could be argued that it suffers from being formed of members from one, or two, capital cities only, and therefore is not in tune with the requirements of the membership.

Perhaps the Federal Committee should be reformulated to include a delegate, or delegates, from each State, and meet less frequently, maybe two or three times a year, maybe physically meeting together, or perhaps via telephone or television hookup.

The State Branches - should they continue as 'Branches' with formal constitutions and the ability to form sub-branches; perhaps we should look at 'area groups', without formal committees and constitutions. One advantage of this would be the ability of a small number of members getting together, say, in a small country town, or distant suburb, instead of going their own individual ways, perhaps being frightened off by the present need for 'formality'.

The 'Journal' has served well over the years, but increasing costs are causing all sorts of problems, perhaps Journal should be sacrificed for a better communication medium costing less to produce.

The three State Branch newsletters, 'Branchline', 'Greenboard' and 'Smoke Signal', do they fulfil a need? At this stage they most certainly do. Should they be sacrificed and their contents published in Journal or its successor? Perhaps!! Perhaps not!!

Having questioned a number of things which we tend to take for granted, and

some of which fall into the 'sacred cow' category, what do I suggest?

Here are some thought provokers.

The Federal Committee's functions to be broadened to cover the following at least:

1 Pressure group for the hobby, for example the rate of import duty, etc, on imported hobby equipment, linking with other hobby groups where necessary.

2 Represent the model railway hobby to manufacturers and retailers to obtain needed items not currently available. Conduct surveys to find the demand level if necessary.

3 Appoint a trade officer who would market such things as track gauges, kits of Australian prototypes, and specialist items not readily available from other sources. He would be required to actively seek and promote them. Profits from this would help to finance AMRA activities.

4 Appoint a research co-ordinating officer who would keep a file of people, publications, and organisations, with access to specialist and prototype information, and actively seek such sources. Details of such information to be published as part of the AMRA members' manual.

5 Issue, in loose leaf form, an AMRA members' manual covering such topics as standards for all the major scale/gauge ratios, setting the standards where they do not currently exist. Test new equipment and issue test reports, summarise the articles in the major Model Railway magazines, and the information in 4 above.

6 Issue a 'Newsletter', say bi-monthly, loose leaf, unfolded and unstapled.

7 Keep membership informed of AMRA activities by publishing a precis of Federal and State Committee minutes and financial reports in the newsletter.

8 Research and institute cost cutting measures where appropriate, an example of this could be renewal notices and renewal cards - send renewal notices with Journal/newsletter and send member-

ship cards back to member with next issue of Journal/newsletter, unless the member requests otherwise and sends a SAE with his subscription renewal. The saving of 2 envelopes and 2 x 24¢ stamps for each member - say, 850 members x 50¢ equals \$425.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Our Journal has served well over the years, however, the problems associated with its erratic appearances have left our membership with a very inconsistent communications medium.

I am aware of the problems associated with publishing such a magazine, not the least of these being cost, which has been cut considerably since we changed printer, and the difficulties the Editor has in obtaining sufficient articles.

Recent information from the Federal Secretary suggests that Journal will appear bi-monthly, starting in January 1982, and to a strict timetable. If that can be achieved, so well and good. But there are some questions I think should be asked and answered.

Is Journal to continue in its present form as a magazine and publish constructional and prototype information? If so, will there be sufficient articles forthcoming from the membership to fill six Journals per year, or will it be necessary to use repeats?

Should we not direct constructional and prototype articles to the Australian Model Railway Magazine, which is the leading Australian model railway magazine, and keep Journal/newsletter for AMRA communications only?

Perhaps Journal should disappear and its place be taken by a newsletter published bi-monthly, in loose leaf, unfolded, unstapled format on, say, A4 paper, leaving the individual member to fold and staple it if he/she so desires. This would cut down the cost and help alleviate part of the problems associated with mailing.

I question whether Journal in its present format can continue and be the SOLE communications method of AMRA.

Rumour has it that some people in elevated positions wish to see the end of the three State newsletters. If this is so, I would seek assurance that the staff of Journal can guarantee that State news be printed, in full, and as supplied, in the requested issue of Journal. Recent correspondence from the Federal Secretary states that the present intention is a 12 or 16 page Journal bi-monthly. The latest issues of the three State newsletters were, Branchline 8 pages, Greenboard 8 pages, Smoke Signal 12 pages a total of 28 pages in one two-month period!!

Will Journal also be able, and willing, to publish State AGM notices, minutes and reports, and such things as Exhibition roster forms, and notices, which currently are distributed as supplements to the Branchline in WA?

Would members in other States be interested in such 'parochial' news, or would they be willing to see Journal, and their money, used for such purposes? I doubt it.

I have heard, via the 'Nullabor Drums' that the printing of Journal is to be done as a 'foreigner' by a member at his place of work. My understanding of a 'foreigner' is that it is an unofficial piece of work, done on an employers' premises, using the employers' equipment, and frequently the employers' materials as well, all unpaid. This can only be classified as fraud and/or theft.

I am deeply concerned that if this is the true situation, and the Federal Committee is aware of it, and are willing to allow it to happen, what is the legal position? Is AMRA and its membership to be involved in something which is at best probably only marginally legal, and at worst totally illegal? What will be the position of AMRA, its committee, and members, if the member concerned is caught doing this 'foreigner'? Suppose he is charged with an offence, will AMRA or its officers be charged as accessories? Will the member concerned expect AMRA, and/or its Officers and members, to compensate him,

and possibly his family, for loss of his job, and any legal costs and penal sanction that might be imposed?

I hope the Federal Committee will be in a position to deny the rumour, and to give exact details as to who is to do the various printing jobs, etc, of Journal.

To keep this point in some perspective, the Federal Secretary, in a recent letter to the WA Branch, states:

'Printing of Journal to be -

a Cover - Commercial printer;

b Contents - Tim Dunlop will organise to buy paper, and pay for the printing and typing time; these costs to be reimbursed.'

(DOES THIS SOUND LIKE A FOREIGNER? Ed)

In view of previous correspondence between the Federal Committee and the WA Branch on the cost of producing Journal, I would like to see a detailed breakdown of the costs published in Journal for the benefit of the members, who should know where their money is going.

The State Branch newsletters - Obviously the three State Committees considered there was a need for a newsletter. In WA the membership have, and continue, to support the Branchline and it serves a very necessary function which is not, at present, served by any other communications medium. My discussion with another State President indicates a similar situation applies there as well.

Until it can be proved conclusively that Journal can fulfil the present function of the Branchline, I will fight determinedly for the continuation of the Branchline, and the right of State Committees to publish their own newsletters.

I would add that the policy of the WA Committee has been, and still is, that the Branchline will not carry articles more suitable to Journal, and was not intended to usurp Journal's position or function. In fact it was Journal that failed us.

In the past various pleas have been made to the membership to 'have their

say', and most appear to fall on deaf ears.

Undoubtedly this discussion paper is going to touch a few raw nerves, and get some people filling their pens from the acid bottle, ready to vent their wrath on me for daring to write about such hallowed subjects.

However, I would ask you to consider, very carefully, what has been written here, and preferably in a rational manner, leaving out the emotion, and then put pen to paper and have your say on

how you consider AMRA and Journal serve you, and what, if anything, you would suggest can be done to improve what is happening now.

Let us have some constructive discussion and ideas, not a spate of personal attacks on those who dare question the established order of things.

Mr Editor you should have no problem filling the next few issues of Journal!!

Ted Thoday

CONTEST JUDGING: Rhyme nor Reason?

JUDGE'S COMMENTS ON RECENT CRITICISM

by Bill Cooper

Apparently this noble Journal has contained some criticism of late, regarding the declining standard of recent contest judging. Such has only reached this judge's ear second hand (being a non-member and hence, presumably, OBJECTIVE and perhaps rather garbled, but the gist seems to be as follows:

* Excessive emphasis placed on 'presentation'...."a ridiculously high 20% or so of points allocated for sitting the entry of a battered piece of Pecoway"... and;

* Lack of comment/criticism on contest entries....."has the judge become lazy/senile to bother?

Well, to begin with, the judge is delighted that people BOTHER to complain. The miniscule entry figures in some categories suggests that apathy rules. There are obviously many more spectators than either entrants or critics. Someone has to bring the judging to account - to question whether the job is being done with at least a medium of rationality. Anyway, as to the criticism.

1 The judge agrees that it is wrong to divert scores from the model to its base.

The model should be judged for itself - in a vacuum, as it were - quite

independent of its environment.

So - what is the fuss about 'presentation'?

Yes, it is true that past judges' comments have been favourable towards **bases under models** - especially if decorated - a polished wooden base, a mirror or ballasted track, for instance. They do enhance a model AND make it much safer to handle.

But, this is only a tiny part of presentation, not actually attracting points - though often the winning models also, incidentally, feature excellent bases. Presentation includes ALL features expanding the viewer's knowledge of the model and should include, as an absolute minimum, sufficient prototype data to show that the model is at least a likeness.

The judge mightn't know a Ka from a C16 or an FS from an SBS. Any information bridging the judge's ignorance must curry his favour - and avoid such comments as "it's a nice model, but carries a pre-1930 boiler ahead of a welded tender. Also, if the entrant confesses such blunders, discovered subsequent to construction (before the superplans became available), then the sentence will be reduced accordingly.

Even freelance models need some background information as to imagined origin. Another neglected feature of presentation is model construction details. Some enlightened people provide brief notes regarding materials and purchased parts - others....nothing. Absolutely nothing. Ideally, adequate 'presentation' includes providing -

- * a base, providing safe handling and a 'frame for the picture';
- * adequate prototype information - photocopies are fine (valuable photos could be lost);
- * Construction data, including -
 - materials used (including fixing, glue);
 - painting details (paints, tools, techniques);
 - photo sequence of major steps, and
 - any special features (that the judge might miss).

Also, if the model operates, some performance details may be helpful, though it is understood that it may be inconvenient or against the entrant's desires to have the model test-run. The judge's view is that an operable model's operation should be observed and assessed in addition to its static qualities, though this is not presently done.

As to the points allocated for presentation, the judge generally follows NMRA (US) practice, with the slight simplification that there is (as yet) no best-in-show model to judge and hence no agonising cross-category comparisons, i.e. no '1/48 scale, Gordon and Gotch station newsagency' vs. 'Nnz Mantissa tamping machine' decisions. NMRA judges allocate up to 7% for conformity (with penalties for lack of prototype photos, drawings and the other six areas of judging (construction, craftsmanship, difficulty, finish, lettering, exceptional engineering, innovation or achievement) are inevitably enhanced by details supplied by the entrant.

So there it is, though an entry CAN be judged solely on its intrinsic merit,

it is to the entrant's advantage to point out what is considered meritorious.

2 As to the recent lack of contest comment, this judge pleads altered circumstances. In past years, when the National contest was divorced from the October Sydney Exhibition, long night sessions were spent at Norm Read's home, agonising over what to write as feeble support for decisions made. Having drooled over super models and run out of superlatives for describing them, it is very difficult to think of something nice to say about, say, a chipped Hornby 5-plank open wagon that someone has painted with what looks like blue ink and labelled as an 'S' truck, especially at 2 am.

Thinking and writing are now lost causes in the hectic rough and tumble of an exhibition environment, and distractions are many - the close hovering spectators, that Chinese bird with the tiny, tight pants...someone, obviously an entrant, glaring at you, daring you to sneer at or drop his entry. Even some subtle (and some quite unsubtle) intimidation is not unknown. Then, of course, having been given a free ticket, one is hardly going to waste good layout viewing time actually WRITING anything, surely. If anything worthwhile is to be written it has to be done there and then, not later.

Nevertheless, it is gratifying to know, both from favourable comments and the whining about its lack, the previous contest comments were read and inwardly digested. Even if some comments on presentation were apparently misinterpreted, it is obvious from the growth in style and number of bases that the message got through to many entrants.

Probably the answer is to return to pre-exhibition judging - an AMRA decision, of course, not mine. The change (to exhibition judging) was made to encourage visitors to bring models with them, rather than risk the package - mangling postal service. Better packing - using styrofoam - or quality courier service (paid at destination by AMRA?) may overcome this problem.

Aeromodellers apparently send fragile rubber powered scale balsa and tissue aircraft overseas to contests - to be flown and then returned.

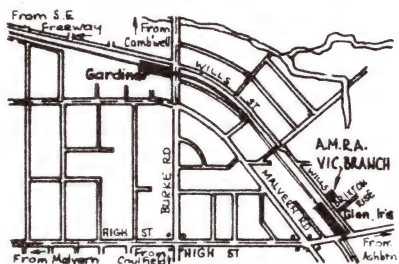
An exhibition of JUDGED models, with prizes displayed AND judges' comments to

public view would surely make for a more attractive display than the present arrangement.

So, just keep those cards and letters coming in folks - including your contest entries!

BRANCH NOTES

VICTORIAN BRANCH NOTES



The February meeting was most enjoyable, with the screening of the comedy film 'The General'.

Present at the meeting were Mr Otto Berg Von Lind, the Chairman of the Model Railway Society of Stockholm, who was a guest of Kevin Murray, and Mr Derek Pemberton, who is a member of a Locomotive Society in Dinting, England. The WA Branch Treasurer, Alan Porter, was also welcomed to the meeting.

Recently, Branch President Roger Lloyd had the pleasure of showing the Federal President, Keith Wilcox, around the clubrooms. Keith was quite impressed at the progress of the Club layout. Other recent interstate visitors were Dick Smart from WA Branch and Ross McLean from NSW.

The following are agenda items for the next few months:

- 28 March Running day on the Club layout, commencing 2 pm.
- 8 April General meeting. Auction night. Competitions -
 - Model - Railway carrying bridge
 - Photo - Railway carrying bridge
- 25 April Running day on Club layout, commencing 2 pm.

- 13 May General meeting. Film night by David Morrison. Competitions -

Model - Australian produced kit

Photo - Announce April results

- 16 May Working bee - general clean up of Clubrooms from 10 am. All help most welcome.

- 30 May Running day on Club layout, commencing 2 pm.

- 10 June Annual General Meeting. Election of new Committee of Management.

Competitions -

Model - Level crossing

Photo - Level crossing

- 27 June Running day on Club layout, commencing 2 pm.

General working bees on the Club layout are held every Tuesday night, except the Tuesday before the general meeting.

The Clubrooms are located at 92 Willie Street, Glen Iris, opposite the Glen Iris railway station. Any interstate or country member who wishes to see the Club layout when they are in Melbourne can ring Roger Lloyd, our Branch President, telephone 459 6508, who will arrange to show you around the clubrooms.

It has come to the attention of the Committee of Management that certain non-members have been using the facilities of the clubrooms for extended periods. It is important to remember that non-members enjoy the benefits of YOUR clubrooms, without making any financial contribution to the Association, which goes to the production of this Journal.

The Committee have passed the following resolution to protect the benefits gained by becoming a member of the Association. 'Members who wish to use the Association's facilities, such as borrowing books from the Branch library, and being able to run trains on the Branch layout, may only do so if they produce their CURRENT membership card. Only members will be given raffle tickets at the Branch general meeting.'

This resolution has been introduced to provide an incentive for non-members to join the Association, and gain the benefits of being a financial member of the Association.

'Sleeper'
Branch Reporter

QUEENSLAND BRANCH NOTES

The Queensland Branch of AMRA is settling into its new clubrooms. The old railway refreshment rooms at South Brisbane Railway Station, which are on lease from the Queensland Railways.

Working bees over the past six months have completely transformed the old bar section with all fixtures being removed, including some office partitions. All the timber has been reclaimed, sorted, de-nailed, and is ready for the layout, which will be built in a semi-modular form for ease of removal, should the lease be terminated.

A complete paint, installation of kitchen and WC facilities, and the setting up of the Branch's library, has turned the Clubroom into a welcome home. Ideally situated in the near city area, it is possible for some of our members, with a few spare hours during the day, to pop in and do work on the layout or clubrooms.

The Branch layout was set up in the clubrooms, and immediately came under fire. Originally built in the early 60s, refurbished about 1968, and resceniced about 1976, it was showing its age. One of the more senior of the experienced modellers, Terry Paton,

offered to refurbish the layout, if he could complete the job strictly on his own. The result is a modularised layout, expertly upgraded, and the multitude of legs and stays have been replaced by stackable height adjustable trestles, designed and built by Terry. These trestles are considered so good, that they have been adopted for the clubroom layout, and some 40 odd are under construction.

As the work progresses, it is particularly noticeable how companionship is building up, as the members work together, and get to know each other.

The exhibition layout has had the back traverser, where the trains were marshalled, replaced by a brand new section of a complete station layout. This means the layout can be reversed on occasions at the exhibitions, for a completely different view by the public. The new trackage will also be much more interesting when the layout is returned to the Clubroom between exhibitions, and becomes part of the clubroom layout.

It was felt that with the amount of money being spend on the layout, it should be utilised as much as possible in the Branch Clubrooms, as well as the exhibition. After considerable discussion, a plan was evolved to join the exhibition layout into the clubroom layout.

With a complete rewire, and improved control, the members are looking forward to operating a really good layout at this year's 1982 exhibition to be held in the Horticultural Pavilion at the RNA Showgrounds over the Labour Day long weekend on 2, 3 and 4 May.

At this stage almost every member of the Queensland Branch, who is a resident within 30 miles of the clubrooms, will have earned a great deal of praise for the marvellous effort being put forward for the Branch's 1982 Clubroom effort, and also the exhibition.

I would, therefore, not try to name anyone in particular, but those who have made the effort deserve a great deal of praise and appreciation by those who were not

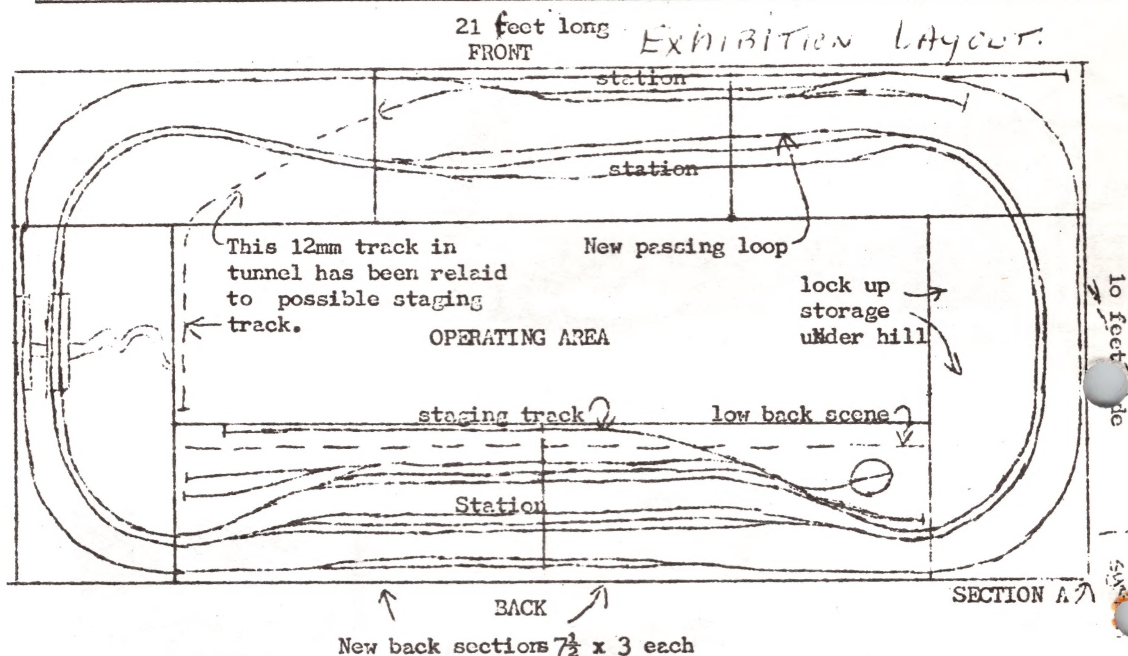


View of the South Brisbane Station Clubroom. The door is at the rear of Terry Paton's car, which has been almost permanently parked there while Terry worked.

Terry Paton in the dim dark hours, working on the exhibition layout in the back-ground. (Terry's complete effort, supported on his trestles.)



Terry and Vice President Jesse, our two permanent residents, working on the layout.



New back sections $7\frac{1}{2} \times 3$ each

able, at this stage, to have been part of that effort.

I include a copy of the clubroom layout, and of our new exhibition layout, which is being beautifully sceniced by John Hill, our resident scenic expert. His good wife Marie has been a tower of strength, boiling the billy, and also on a paintbrush. (She claims she was too lonely at home over the week-ends.)

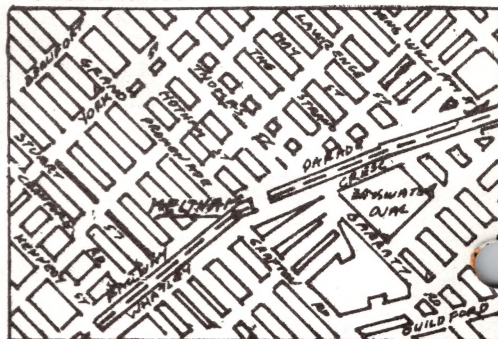
L W Woods
Publicity Officer

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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BRANCH NOTES



The Western Australian Branch will be conducting its fourth 'open' modelling competition, with judging taking place on Saturday 30 May 1982. There are three categories -- locomotives, rolling stock and structures, each subdivided into three sections - scratch built, kit built/modified, and ready to use modified.

The competition is open to ALL modelers and trophies will be awarded for all

categories with special trophies for the best model by a junior, the best model of a Western Australian prototype, and the Ossie Gully Cup for the best model in the competition.

Further details may be obtained from the Competition Co-ordinator, PO Box 60, Maylands, WA 6051.

Coming Program

MAY

3	Mon	Annual General Meeting
8	Sat	General club activities
12	Wed	Bring and show
17	Mon	General club activities
	Sat	General club activities
26	Wed	General club activities
29	Sat	Modelling competition -

		open night
31	Mon	General club activities
JUNE		
7	Mon	Guest speaker
12	Sat	General club activities
16	Wed	Auction
21	Mon	General club activities
26	Sat	General club activities
30	Wed	General club activities

Times of meetings are as follows:

Monday and Wednesday - 8 pm

Saturday - 2 pm

The rooms will be open at least 15 minutes prior to starting time. All meetings will be held at the Clubrooms upon Meltham Station, unless otherwise stated.

A.R.H.S. (QLD) FIELD DAY 1980

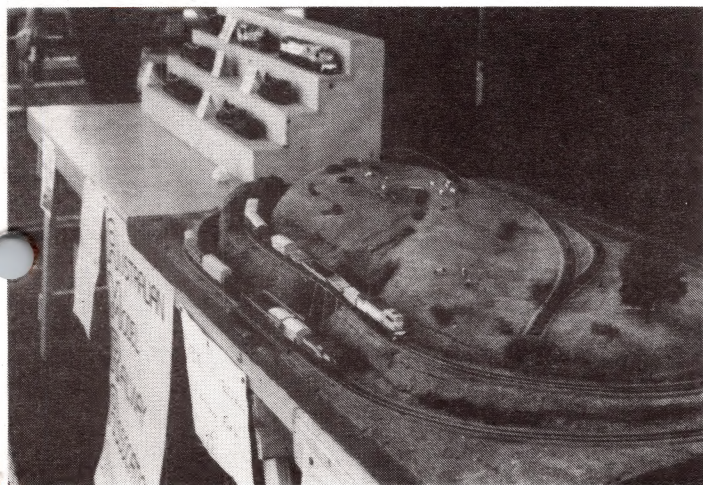


Photo 1

QR models in Ttn3½ using N gauge equipment, modelled by Geoff Perkins.

1600 class D/E and train on high level line.

DH class D/H and train on low level line.

Layout by S & D Malone.

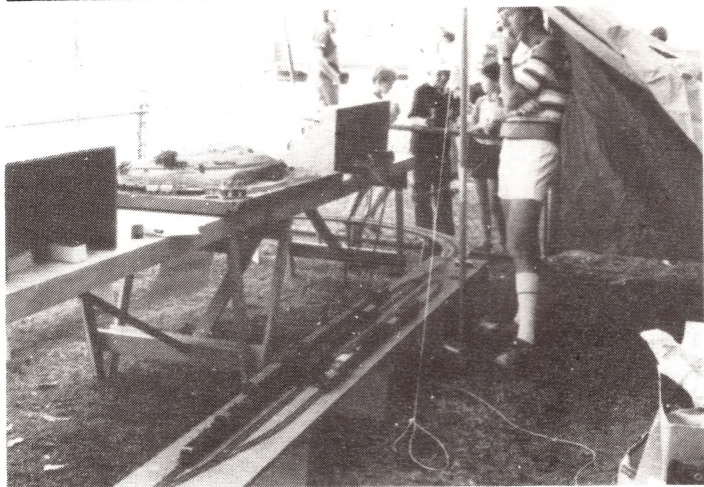


Photo 2
'Nero Fiddles.....' A thoughtful John Hill is apparently unaware of the catastrophe occurring at his feet.

Photo 3
3½" gauge 'Tich', builder unknown.

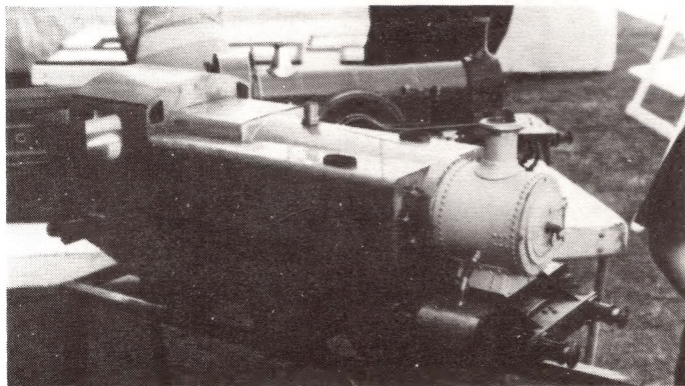
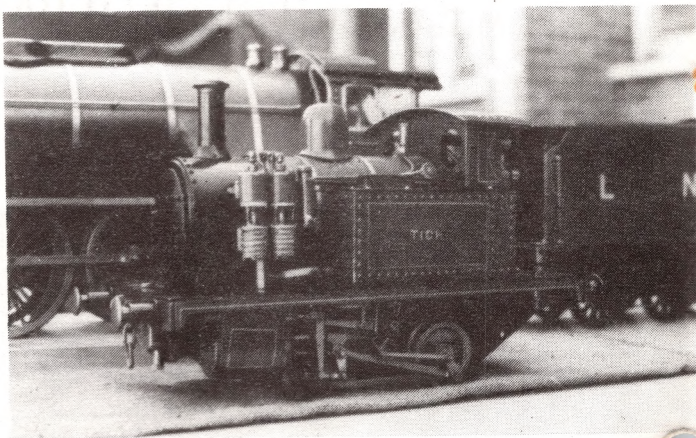


Photo 4
5" gauge 0-6-0T, builder unknown.